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NSC FOR ELISABETH MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/27/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [IN](#) [NP](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: NORWAY'S DEVELOPMENT MINISTER SOLHEIM'S NEPAL VISIT

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Mike Hammer, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) On April 27 we met with Torre Hattrem and Bente Bingham of the MFA's Peace and Reconciliation Section and discussed Norwegian Development Minister Solheim's upcoming May 2-5 visit to Kathmandu. According to the MFA, Solheim's visit is to determine whether the situation will likely stabilize. In addition, Solheim will assess whether to re-establish total development funding (and, if so, what areas to focus upon). Hattrem noted that Norway previously cut bilateral development cooperation with Nepal by ten percent and, given the "more positive political developments," will strongly reconsider normalizing development assistance.

2.(C) Solheim's schedulers are having difficulties in arranging meetings (particularly as there is no formed government). His advisers advocated waiting a few weeks until a government was set up before going (but were overruled). Solheim hopes to meet the new Prime Minister of Nepal, in addition to local political figures, officials at the U.S. and Indian Embassies, the U.N. Coordinator and members of the Nepal Planning Commission (given that the Ministry of Finance is in disarray).

3.(C) We queried Hattrem if he thought the recent Roundtable discussions in Nepal (hosted by the Norwegians) had any impact or influence in the ensuing political events. He noted that the Norwegians were themselves surprised, although most of the attendees "dreamed this (political shift/reinstallation of Parliament" would occur.

4.(C) Comment: Norway remains keen to play a role in Nepal, whether that be in trying to facilitate dialogue or by providing financial or other assistance to help promote stability and democracy. A/S Boucher, currently in Oslo for a Sri Lanka Co-Chairs meeting, will be getting together with Solheim and will have an opportunity to discuss next steps on Nepal in advance of their trips.
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